

## Economic Recovery Package

On February 13, 2009, the House passed the conference report for H.R. 1, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Mike supported final passage of the conference report in order to create jobs in Maine and nationwide, but had reservations about the makeup of the package and its effect on the nation's deficit. Click on the button below to find out how the stimulus funding is being spent nationwide, and click [HERE](#) to find out what the State of Maine is doing. You can also click [HERE](#) to get the full legislative text of the bill. Click [HERE](#) to access resource guides that Mike compiled. A column written by Mike on the bill can be found below.

### The Need to Move Forward

By Representative Mike Michaud

February 19, 2009

With the President's signature, the stimulus is now law. There was a healthy back and forth and some serious debate and consideration about what should and shouldn't be in the package. In my view, the final product was not perfect. But it was a necessary step to jumpstart our economy.

The bill contained a number of very important investments for Maine that will help create and retain jobs. The package extends unemployment benefits and increases food stamps. These are investments that I strongly support. These programs deliver help to those who most need it. They also stimulate the economy because beneficiaries will quickly spend the additional funds. In fact, for every dollar spent on unemployment insurance benefits, \$1.63 in economic activity is generated, and for food stamps it is \$1.73 for each dollar invested. The investments in unemployment benefits alone will help over 70,000 Mainers.

The bill also invests \$174 million in Maine's infrastructure, which will create jobs quickly and improve our state's roads and bridges. An investment of \$195 million will go to Maine for school repairs and other important state priorities. While I believe that there should have been more investments like these in the package, the combination of targeted investments and tax incentives is a step in the right direction.

Moving forward it's important to continue to make smart budget choices so that we invest in an economic recovery that is sustainable.

We need to continue to invest in small businesses and continue the gains made in the stimulus bill. The provisions which provide tax cuts and better access to credit for small businesses are a great start, but I believe that more must be done. Small businesses are the backbone of our economy and our entrepreneurs need the tools to grow and create jobs.

We must also continue to invest in education. Our economy can't move forward without an educated and trained workforce. The jobs of today and tomorrow require that we improve our educational infrastructure.

The stimulus bill also invests in energy infrastructure and development that will help us to reduce our dependence on foreign oil and create jobs. These types of investments need to be coupled with future commitments to addressing our nation's energy needs. That's why I am continuing to push a bill that would provide tax incentives that would help manufacturers convert to biomass power. This will help create and maintain jobs while at the same time promoting a more sustainable, locally-produced energy source.

We also need to follow up on the transportation and infrastructure investments made in the bill. As a member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, I will be working with my fellow committee members in writing the next multi-year reauthorization of our transportation programs. I am hopeful that we can fix our state's truck weight problem. I am also working to ensure that Maine receives a level of funding that will allow for substantial improvements, rather than simply maintaining our infrastructure.

We must also not lose sight of the need to address our growing health care crisis. Unfortunately, health care costs continue to spiral out of control. This is a huge burden on small businesses, and has been cited as a major cause for the slow job recovery nationwide. I believe that we must get a handle on this problem and take steps at the national level to lower costs, promote access, and push for full coverage.

The road to recovery may be a long one, but as a country we must move forward. We must fight to preserve the jobs that we have, while we seek out new opportunities to put Mainers to work. The stimulus package is a first step, but so much more remains to be done.